

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 11614 071438Z

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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FOR CU/ARA

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC, CI

SUBJ: MOTION ON SUSPENSION OF THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM FOR CHILE

REF: STATE 296005

1. SANTIAGO FULBRIGHT COMMISSION DOES NOT AGREE WITH STATEMENT IN RESOLUTION QUOTED IN REFTEL THAT "U.S. ACADEMICS COULD NOT NOW FREELY TEACH AND CONDUCT RESEARCH IN CHILE". IT THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT BEFORE ANY DECISION IS ADOPTED, U.S. SCHOLARS WHO VISITED CHILE UNDER THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM DURING 1974-1975 AND 1976 SHOULD BE CONSULTED WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEIR FREEDOM TO TEACH AND CONDUCT RESEARCH IN CHILE WAS CURTAILED IN ANY WAY.

2. EMBASSY WOULD ADD FOLLOWING COMMENT TO FOREGOING. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHIZE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, WE SERIOUSLY QUESTION WHETHER THE ADOPTION OF A SIMILAR POSITION BY THE BOARD OF FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS WOULD BE WARRANTED FOR USEFUL, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS.

3. FIRST, AS INDICATED ABOVE, AS FAR AS WE KNOW AMERICAN ACADEMICS WORKING IN CHILE UNDER THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM, UNLIKE CHILEAN ACADEMICS, HAVE NOT BEEN RESTRICTED IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES. WE DO NOT SAY THAT

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 11614 071438Z

IT COULD NOT HAPPEN, BUT WE HAVE NOT NOTED IT.

4. SECOND, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY FELT THAT WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING WE COULD TO MAINTAIN THE AMERICAN VOICE IN CHILE AND SHOULD NOT COOPERATE IN SILENCING IT BY CUTTING OFF SUCH USEFUL TIES WITH CHILE AS STILL EXIST.

5. THIRD, THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION SINGLES OUT CHILE, ALTHOUGH ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS EQUALLY RESTRICTED IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, IN LATIN AMERICAN AND ELSEWHERE, BY AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES OF THE LEFT AND RIGHT. CHILEANS OF MODERATE PERSUASION TEND TO REACT TO THIS TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION WITH A KIND OF "SIEGE MENTALITY" RESPONSE. IT IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO STIMULATE THIS TREND.

6. FOURTH, THE ASSUMPTION THAT RESTRICTIONS ON THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM CAN BE JUSTIFIED BY ANALOGY WITH RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IS FAULTY. THE LATTER HAVE AN APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON THE JUNTA'S POLICIES; THE FORMER MERELY ISOLATES STILL FURTHER THE REMAINING SCHOLARS IN CHILE.

7. FIFTH, AS THE BOARD OF FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS WILL RECALL* THE CHILEANS HAVE JUST ARRANGED FOR MASSIVE RELEASE OF HUNDREDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD WITHOUT CHARGE OR SUBJECTED TO INTERNAL EXILE. U.S. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TERMED THIS ACTION A POSITIVE STEP AND HAVE URGED THAT IT BE FOLLOWED UP WITH OTHERS, LOOKING TOWARD A NORMALIZATION OF CHILEAN LIFE. TO RESPOND TO THE CHILEAN MOVE WITH WHAT WILL BE INTERPRETED AS ANOTHER REBUFF WILL STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THOSE IN CHILE WHO ARE ARGUING THAT IT IS USELESS TO START CHILE BACK ON THE ROAD TO DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES.

8. FINALLY IT IS APPARENT FROM STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE-DESIGNATE VANCE THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS IMPORTANTLY CONCERNED WITH THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES, SPECIFICALLY IN CHILE AND GENERALLY IN OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SANTIA 11614 071438Z

COUNTRIES. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT ANY CHANGES IN PRESENT PRACTICES BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION ON THIS SUBJECT.
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